

The power of praier.

SERMON PREACHED
in the Cathedrall Church of
Exeter in August. 1596.

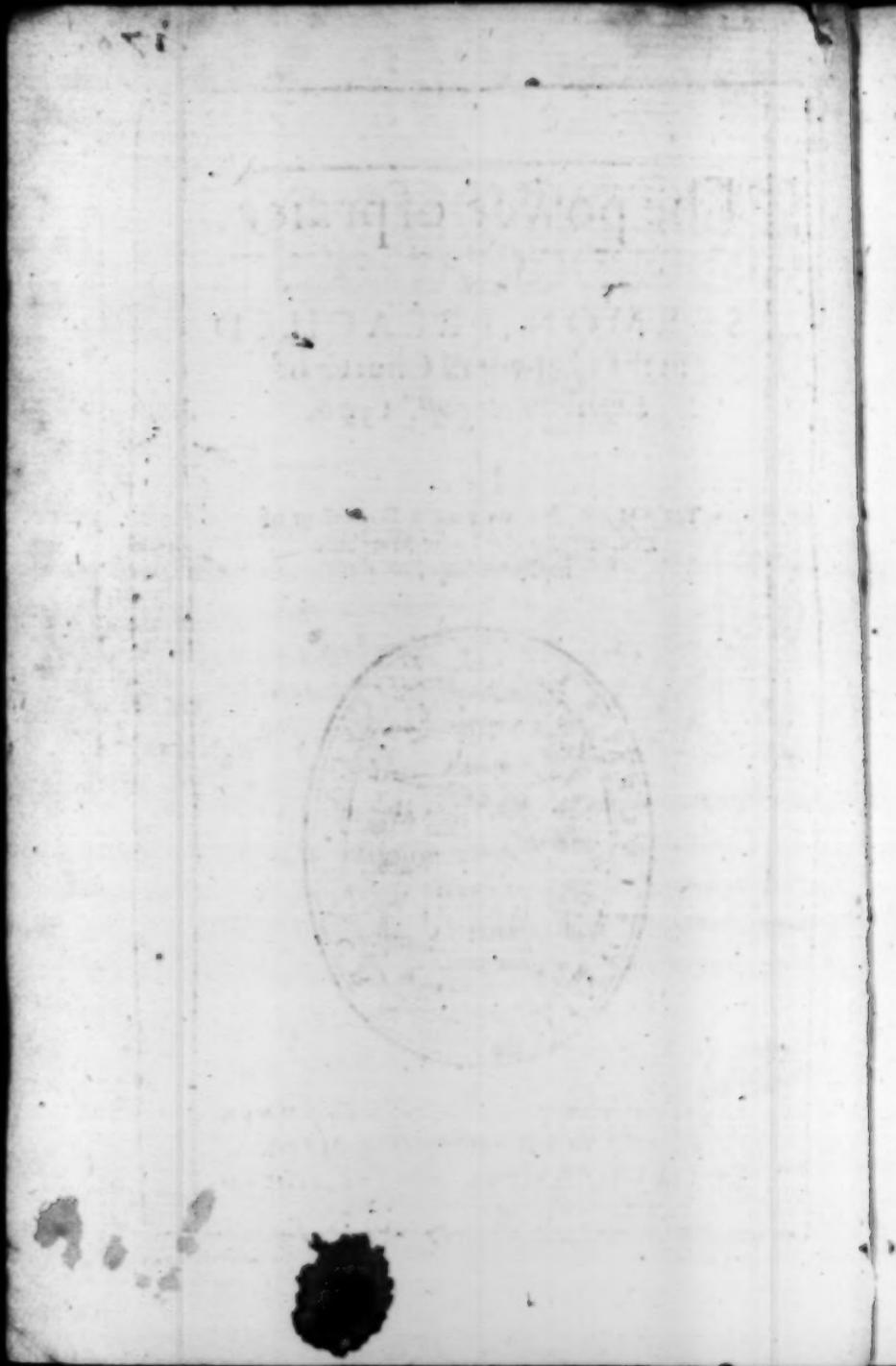
By

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*And are to be sold in Pauls Churchyard at the signe
of the Crowne by Simon Waterston.*





To the Queenes most excellent Maiestie.



*E*ligion, dread and
deare Soueraigne, is
an unmoveable foun-
dation of highest au-
thoritie and honour.
O then howe blessed

*and unmoveable is our peace and ioy?
God baning blessed vs with a king, who in
religion and learning excelleth all aline,
and his Maiestie with a Queene in
due proportion answerable to himselfe.
Wherefore as it is our dutie to ioyne both
in our daily praiers: so neither would I
separate you in my humble endeauours.
For the present felicitie and glory of this
realme resteth wholly in his Maiestie.*

*Gloriosa in
deum pietas
honoriuit re-
giis immobile
et fundamen-
tum. Cyrillos
ad Theodos.
de recta fide.*

but the future hope to haue these infinite
blessings continued vpon vs and all our
posteritie, even vnto the worlds end, aris-
eth from you both , in respect of that
most happie roiall issne you haue had al-
readie, and which if it please God you
may haue hereafter . Which as it will be
our greatest securitie and comfort: so that
it may be no danger to your Maiesties
health, especially that whiche your High-
nesse now goeth withall, we shall continu-
ally and importunately pray and beseech
at Gods hands . And what the power
of praier is, this short sermo which I pre-
sume to offer vnto your sacred Maiestie,
doest in some sort shewe.

Your Maiesties most deuoted
and obedient subiect,

Thomas Playfere.



THE POWER of prayer.

THE TEXT.

*Aske, and it shall be given you : seeke,
and you shall finde : knocke, and it shal
be opened unto you.*

Matth. 7.7.



Efore I come to the particular intreatie of this text, it will not be amisse, as I take it, generally to obserue some fewe things. Our Sauiour saies not here, as to one, Aske thou, seeke thou, knocke A i thou :



The power

thou: but as to many, *Aske, seeke, knocke.* For it is, *Our Father;* though it be, *I belkene.* A sparke of fire in the fire, keepes fire; by it selfe, of it selfe goes out. A droppe of water in the sea, is safe; beeing alone, is soone dried vp. Euen so, in priuate praier, that small sparke of zeale which is in vs, may quickly be put out, and that little droppe of devotion which is in vs may quickly be dried vp: but in publique praier, it is not so. Wherupon Daniel ^a requesteth his companions, Sidrach, Misach, and Abednago, to pray with him. Yea, Joel ^b aduiseth them, to gather a solemne assemblie, and to call the elders, and all the inhabitants of the land, into the house of the Lord, to offer vp praiers vnto God. A threefold cord, is not easily broken^c. Now what is praier els, but a cord, wherewith we binde Gods hands, when he is readie to smite vs for our sinnes? Euen as Elsay complaining to god, saies, ^d There is none that

as. 17.

b. 1. 14.

Ecclesiastes 4.12.

d. 6. 4. 7.

of praier.

3

that calleth vpon thy name, none that riseth vp to take hold of thee, to hold thy hands, and binde them fast with the cord of praier. But if a twofold cord, or a threefold cord, cannot easily be broken, wheras two or three of Daniels companions are gathered together in the name of Christ: then much more a hundred-fold cord, or a thousand-fold cord, cannot easily be broken, wheras not onely two or three of vs haue agreed vpon a petition in earth, but euен Ieels solemne assembly, such a solemne assembly as here is, many hundreds, yea many thousands of the faithfull, are gathered together in the house of the lord, to offer vp praier vnto God. Such a strong cord of praier, as this is, so well twisted by so many, must needs most forcibly draw downe from heauen, infinit graces for vs. And therefore our Sauiour saies here, not as to one, but as to many, *Aske, seeke, knocke.* So likewise it is not saide here, as in the

A 2 time

The power

time present , that by and by we obtaine the thing we pray for ; but as in the time to come , *And it shall be given you, and you shall find, and it shall be opened unto you.* For as Laban kept Jacob a long while from his yongest daughter , whome he loued best , that his loue might be more increased continually : so God oftentimes holdeth vs a while in suspence , that he may the more sharpen our appetite , and inflame our ^c desire . Because , saies Gregorie , *The more earnestly he is desired of vs , the more sweetely he is delighted in vs.* Wherefore , as a merchant , beeing about to put money into a bagge , and perceiving the bagge will scarce hold all the money , first stretches out the bagge , before he put in the money : after the same sort , in this case , dealeth God with vs . God knowing that those blessings , wherewith vpon our praiers he purposes to inrich vs , are so great , that our hearts as yet are not capable of them , staies a while , till afterward when our hearts

*e Ut secundum
ur desideria.
Martial. Epig.
ad Tolos.*

*f Quo à nobis
avidius desi-
deratur , eo de-
nobis suavius
intus.*

of praier.

1

are more inlarged , and stretched out like a wide bagge, we may thē receiue them , when we are fitter for them. Whereupon the princely prophet saies, Lord, I crie vnto thee in the day time, and thou hearest not, also in the night time , and yet this is not to be thought follie in s me. Some perhaps would thinke it a great point of folly, for a man to call and crie vnto him, who stoppes his eares, and seemes not to heare. Neuertheles , this follie of the faithfull, is wiser then all the wisdome of the world . For we know well enough , that howsoeuer God seem at the first not to heare, yet, The Lord is a sure refuge , *in due time*, in affliction. First , *in due time*: then *in affliction*. Because , for the most part, in helping vs, God rather respects the due time , then the affliction. So that although, as soone as we pray, he doe not alway presently free vs from affliction, yet if we can be content to wait a while, and tarie the Lords leisure, in

A 3

his

Psal.32.2.
Ker in vse
in iust. Sep-
tuagint.

Psal.9.9.

his due time, he will surely releeue vs.
And therefore it is said here, not as in
the time present, but as in the time to
come, *And it shall be givien you, and you
shall finde, and it shall be opened unto
you.*

Now then in this whole sentence,
two principle parts would be consider'd.
The first, what we in our pray-
er must performe to god. The second
what God for our prayer will per-
forme to vs. What we in our praier
must performe to God, is in these
wordes, *Aske, seeke, knock.* *Aske* with
the mouth, *seeke* with the heart, *knock*
with the hand. What God for our
praier will performe to vs, is in these
wordes, *And it shalbe givien you, and you
shall finde, and it shalbe opened unto you.*
And it shall be givien you, that's for tem-
porall things : and you shall finde, that's
for spirituall things : and it shalbe ope-
ned unto you, that's for eternall things.
Aske, seek, knock, and it shalbe given
you,

of praier.

Y

you, and you shall find, and it shall be opened unto you. First we must aske with the mouth. Iosakim the virgin Maries father, going to the wildernes to pray, said thus, *Prayer shalbe my meate and i drink*. Whereby it is evident, that as meate and drink, the naturall food of the bodie, must go in at the mouth: so on the other side, prayer, the spirituall food of the soule, must go out of the mouth. Which is the reason, why Pythagoras willed his schollers to pray aloud ^k. Not that he thought that God could not otherwise heare, but to teach vs, as Clemens noteth^l, that as our dealing with men must be as in the sight of God: so our prayer to God, must be as in the hearing of men. Ezechias king of the Iewes, witnesseth of himselfe, that praying in his sicknes, he chattered like a young swallowe ^m. Nowe we knowe by that prouerb, which forbiddeth to keepe swallows vnder the same roofe ⁿ where we keepe our selues, that no

i Ἐστι μός ιν-
χρήσπερα, καὶ
πάμα.

k Μῆτα φαντί^s
ιούχοσθαι.

l Stro. L. 4.

m Isa. 38.14.

n οὐκοιος στεγε.

The power

v 62.6.

p Num. 22.4.

q Ose. 14.2.

c Cant. 4.16.

bird is so troublesome for chattering, as the swallow is. His meaning then was this: that as a yong swallow openeth her mouth, and neuer leaues yawning vnto the damme, till shee be satisfied: so he opened his mouth, and as the Prophet Esay saies ^v, kept no silence, neuer left *asking*, gaue the lord no rest, vntil he had mercy vpon him. Balack, king of the Moabites, speakeith thus ^v, Shall this multitude licke vp all that are round about vs, as a calfe licketh vp the grasse of the field? Nowe we knowe that a calfe licketh vp the grasse of the field with his mouth. The thing then which he feared, was this: least the Israelites should licke vp, that is, ouercome and destroy him, and all his, with the *asking* of their mouthes, with their praiers to God, which are called ^v the calues of the lipps, euен as a calfe licketh vp the grasse of the field. The Church wisheth the southerne winde would blow, that her spices might flowe forth.

The

of praier.

The southerne winde, is the milde & comfortable spirit of God. The spices, are the praiers, the sweete odours of the Saints . So that we wish the southerne winde would blowe vpon vs that our spices maight flowe forth, when as we wish the holy Ghost would worke vpon vs , that our praiers might flowe forth. That as God breatheth in his spirit into vs, by the inspiration of grace : so we might breath out our spirit vnto God, by the respiration of praier. According to that of the prophet , *I opened my mouth and drewe in breath. I drewe in breath, ther's inspiration . I opened my mouth, ther's respiration* So that they which never open their mouthes to aske, are dumbe fishes , which haue liues, and breath not; or else dead i-dols, which haue mouths, and speake not. Whereas in trueth, euery one that hath an eare to heare, ought to heare ; and so euery one that hath a mouth to speake, ought to speake. Speake vnto

{Psal.119.133.

The power

Exodus.30.8.

u Can.8.13.

vnto the rocke, saies God to Moses ⁴, when the children of Israel wanted water in the wildernesse. And after the same manner , when we want the water of comfort , in the wildernesse of this world, we must *aske* it of God, we must speake for it vnto the rocke Christ Iesus. For it was his onely request he made to his spouse ; when he tooke his very last farewell of her vpon earth , Let me heare thy voice ⁴. As if Christ shoulde say thus to his Church, My dearest, now I am readie to ascend vp vnto my father. Howbeit, in the meane while, I will not leaue you comfortlesse . But though I shall be absent from you in bodie, yet I will be present with you in spirit; alwaies beholding your or- der of seruice, and hearing your prai- er vnto me. Therefore, let vs not here- after be strange to one another , but let tokens of louing kindnesse passe continually betwixt vs . I will send downe to you my spirit , like tongues
of

of praier.

III

of fire. Send you vp to me your prai-
er, like pillars of smoake. And in case
you want any thing at any time , doe
no more, but let me heare your voice;
let me by a praier , as by a letter from
you vnderstand it, and you shall haue
it. Ask, and it shall be giuen you.

Yet it is not enough for vs, to aske
with the mouth : we must also *seeke*
with the heart . For seeking with the
heart, hath oftentimes preuailed, with-
out the asking of the mouth. But as-
king with the mouth, could never yet
obtaine any thing of God , without
the seeking of the heart . Therefore
Hierom findeth himselfe greatly grie-
ued, that now and then in praier time,
his mouth & his mind went not both
together. My minde , saies he , ^x is
wandring or walking in this or that
gallery : or else telling or counting
this or that summe of monie : or di-
uers other waies misled and seduced.
This is satans subtilitie, to be then most
busie

^x Aut per por-
ticus deambu-
lo, aut de
fazore cogito
in dialog. ad-
uerius Lucifer:
I plo in tem-
pore quo ele-
guare mentem
paramus in-
sertis manibus,
cognitionibus
ad terrena
pierumq; de-
nunciamur. Ambr.
de Fuga sicuti
c. i citante Au-
gust. contra
Iul. l. 2.

The power

busie in tempting of vs, when we are most busie in praying to God. As when two goe to law with one another, the plaintiff will doe what he can, to hinder the defendant, that the iudge may not heare what he is able to say in his own cause: in like sort the deuill, the common plaintiff, the cōmon accuser of all mankind, when he feeth vs vpon our knees, pleading for our selues by prayer , and *seeking* fauour and pittie of God, the iudge of all, then doth he most interrupt and disturbe vs. And euen as the furies , are described to hate snakes and serpents vpon their heads , in stead of haire : so sathan distracts our mindes, and makes vs like furies , putting peſtilent and noysome cogitations into our heades, in stead of deuout and holy affections . Which is the cause why Job, ^y before he fell downe vpon the ground to pray, did ſhaue his head, did ſhaue and cut off all idle and earthly thoughts, which are nothing els,

of praier.

els, but snakes and serpents, suggested by that old serpent the deuill. For blessed Job knew right well, it was vnpossible God should heare him, if he heard not himselfe. No no, saies God, I will never heare such a people, because this people drawes neare to me with their mouthes, & honour me with their lippes, but their hearts are farre from ^a me. What then saies the Apostle? I will pray with my breath, or with my mouth: yea and I wil pray also with my vnderstanding, or with my ^a heart. Seeing indeede fие wordes, though they were no more, comming from a well disposed and a faithfull heart, are a thousand times better, thē ten thousand words, which are never at all vttered, but muttered onely and mumbled vp in the mouth. Gods promise to his people is this, You ^b shall *seeke* me, and you shall finde me, because you shall *seeke* me with your whole heart. Gods performance of his promise is this,

^a Esa. 29.13.^a 1. Cor. 14.15.^b Deut. 4.39.

The power

c Jerem.39. 13.

this, e You haue sought me, and you haue found me, because you haue sought me with your whole heart. Therefore when thou seekest, *seeke* with thy heart; when thou praiest enter into thy chamber. Thy lippes are but the chamber dore. So that, when thou hast opened the dore of thy lips, then thou must enter into the very chamber of thine heart. That thy praier may not be an emptie or a windie praier, puffed or blowne from the lungs, or from the lippes: but a heartie and a pithie praier, a sacrifice which hath marrow and ^dlatnes. Such a sacrifice as Dauid offered, wheras hauing first said, *My heart hath failed me*, I haue lost my heart: anon after he saies, *I have now, O Lord, found my heart again to pray unto thee*. Salomon deckt & garnished his temple, before he praied in it: and so before thou praiest, prepare thy ^eheart. Be sure thou finde and furnish thy heart, which is the true temple of him.

d Medallatum
sacrificium.
Psal. 66.15.

e 4. Psal.

f Inueni cor
meum.
1.Sam.7.37.g Ecclesiasti-
cus 18.22.

of praier.

him, who is greater then Salomon.
 And as that woman that sought her
 groat, swēpt ouer all the whole house;
 so whē thou *seekest* any thing of God,
 sweepe ouer the whole house of thy
^h heart : say with Manasses, O Lord, I
 bow vnto thee, the knees of my heart:
 seeing thou hast saide, *Secke ye my*
face, thy face, O Lord, doe I seek: yea
 I doe seek thee with my whole heart:
 seeing thou hast saide, *Secke, and you*
shall finde.

h Psalms.

Yet it is not enough for vs to *seeke*
 with the heart : we must also *knocke*
 with the hand. For he that was borne
 blinde, could notwithstanding both
 see and say, that God heareth not sin-
 ners; but that every one which calleth
 vpon the name of the Lord, must de-
 part from iniquitie. So that it is to li-
 tle purpose, for a man to *seck*, though
 with never so faithfull a heart, except
 also he *knocke* with a righteous hand
 The heretikes called *Euchites*, profet-
 sed

The power

sed to doe nothing els but pray . Because the Apostle exhorteth vs to pray continually . But they did not consider , that to pray alwaies, is to serue God alwaies . And that a godly life *knocks* aloude, and is a perpetuall praier to God . So that professing to pray , and to doe nothing else , in effect they did nothing lesse . Seeing as Theodoret reporteth of them , They did^h nothing for the most part , but sleep . Whereas in Basils iudgement , a praier should be filled , not with syllables , or good words , so much , as with good workes . Which none can doe , who either with these heretickes , doe nothing at all , or else no good thing at all , but onely that which is ill with others . When you shall multiply your praiers vnto me , saies God ^k , I wil not heare you , because your hāds are full of blood . If a subiect should offer vp a supplication , hauing his hands imbruēd in the blood of the kings sonne , tell me , I pray you , what thinke

In Kasiodoros
vñ māfīs.

i Oū rūlla-
Gār, dāre
wp̄cīs.

In Eusebius.

of praier.

thinkē you? how would the king take it? would he grant him his request, trow you? or rather would he not be most wrathfully incensed, and enra- ged against him? And euen so doth God take it at our handes when we knock with bloody & vncleane hands, presuming still to pray, and yet con- tinually crucifying the sonne of God by our sinnes. Therefore say the god- ly, Let vs lift vp our hearts with our handes¹. They say not, Let vs lift vp our hearts alone: but let vs lift vp our hearts with our hands. Let vs not on- ly seeke with our hearts, but also knock with our hands: yea euen with inno- cent hands. And another; ^{1 Lam. 3:42.} Let my prayer be directed vnto thee as incense: & let the lifting vp of my hāds, be an euening sacrifice vnto thee. And yet another: I will that men pray eue- ry where; lifting vp pure handes ². For as the precious stone *diasclates*, though it haue very many excellent soueraignties in it, yet it looseth the al,

^{20 Psal 141:2}

^{21 Tim. 2:8.}

The power.

if it be put in a dead mans mouth : so
prayer, which is the only pearle and
iewell of a Christian, though it haue
very many rare vertues in it, yet it
looseth them euery one, if it be put
into a mans mouth, or into a mans
heart either, that is dead in sinne, and
doth not knock with a pure hand.
Hence it is, that the Church is said to
be perfumed with frankincense and
myrr. ^o By frankincense is meant, a
burning seruencie of affectiō, when-
as an enflamed heart lecketh. By myrr
is meant, mortification and dying vnto
sinne, when as an yndeified hand
knocketh. As when the Church saies, ^p
My hands drop downe myrr, and my
fingers pure myrr, vpon the handles
of the barre. This is that holy perfume
of the tabernacle, which god appoynted
to be made of pure myrr, and fran-
kincense, of each like waights. ^q Note
that, Of each like waights. But we for
the most part, marr it in the making.
For we put into this perfume of pray-
er,

^o Cant. 3.6.

^p Cant. 5.5.

^q Exod. 30.34.

of praier.

er whole pounds of frankinsence, but not a dram, nay scarce so much as one graine of mirr. We put into it much frankinsence, much pretence of faith, much shew of seeking with the heart; but little myrr, little true mortification, little holines of h[im]self, little sound knocking with the hand. Nay, that which is most lamentable, or rather most detestable of all, some are not ashamed, in stead of this pure myrrhe, to put in the very drugges, and the dregges of their vile finnes. Which is the cause why many a mans praier, is so lothsome, and so odious to God. Whereas if we would make this perfume, as it should be made, according to Gods prescription, and put in as much of the myrrhe, as of the frankinsence, of each like waight, then I assure you, no pomander which is made of amber and muske, would be so pleasant in the nostrils of God, as this perfume of praier, where-with the Church is perfumed, which

The power

is made of frankincense and myrrhe. Of frankincense, in a heart that seeketh; and myrrhe, in a hand that knocketh. When Moses praied in mount Oreb, his hands were holden vp by Vr and Aaron. Yeat they did not onely hold vp his hands, but also they held his rod in his hands. Now the rodde of Moses was a figure of the crosse of Christ. Whereby we are taught, that we must not knocke with our owne hands, but with Moses rod in our hands, not trusting to be heard for the works of our owne hands, for our own merits, but for Christis mercies. For this rodde of Moses is the crosse of Christ, the key of Dauid, the key wherewith Elias knockt; or rather indeede he stood not without, knocking like a stranger, but with this key of praier, he lockt and yn lockt heauen at his pleasure. Among them that haue beene borne of women, there hath not risen vp a greater then Iohn Baptist. Not a greater.

True.

Exod. 17.5.

1 Sam. 5.17.

of praier.

II

True. Onely the first John Baptist Elias was as great , as the second Elias John Baptist. For both of them came in one and the selfe same spirit, in one and the selfe same power. No maruell then though Elias , beeing such a holy man , one while by turning the key one way,did locke vp the whole heauen , another while by turning the same key of praier as much another way,in the turning of a hand, did vnlocke all the dores and windowes of heauen , and set them wide open. Why doe ye maruell at this? Euen we, we our selues, I say , shall be able to doe as much as euer Elias did , if we come in the spirit and power of Elias, as Iohn Baptist did. If we haue such a spirit in our heart to seeke , and such a power in our hand to knocke, it shall likewise be opened vnto vs. For Christ hath saide here, Knocke, and it shalbe opened vnto you. Thus much for the first part,what we in our prai-
er must performe to God , in these

B 3 words,

The power

words, *Aske, seekes, knocke.*

14.3.

The second part followeth, what God for our prayer will performe to vs, *Andas shall be giuen you.* That's for temporall things. In another place it is said, *Give, and it shall be giuen you.* Here, *Aske, and it shall be ginen you.* So that it is all one with God. We may get as much of him by asking, as by giuing. By asking that which we haue not, as by giuing that which we haue. Yet S. James saies, " You aske, and it is not giuen you. But the reason follows, Because you aske amisse. Because you aske not with your mouth. For you aske temporall things, to consume them vpon your lusts. Now though this be the ende which thou intendest, yet thou darest not confess so much with thy mouth. Therefore then perhaps, thou maist aske and misse, whenas thou dost aske amisse. Whenas, saies Barnard, "either thou dost aske from the wring word,

*u Aut prater
verium peis,
ut propter
ven. um non
petis.*

or

of praier.



or els thou doft not aske for the begotten word. Seeing every thing which we aske, as it must be assured and warranted to vs by the Scripture, which is the written word; so it must be countenanced and commended to God by Christ, which is the begotten word. Now both these wordes, written and begotten, presuppose a mouth. Which if they be in thy mouth, then Gods promise is plaine, Open thy mouth, and I will fill it. Aske of me, and I will give thee, the heathen for thine inheritance. For the eyes of the Lord, are vpon the righteous, and his eares are in their ^x praiers. He saies not, their praiers are in his eares, but, his eares are in their praiers. To signifie, that though our praiers be so weake, that they cannot pierce through the cloudes, & much lesse enter into the eares of the Lord of Hostes, yet that he will bowe downe, and incline his eares vnto our praiers. So that though our praiers

^x Aures eius
in precibus e-
orum. Ps. 34.16.

The power

y Iosua. 10.14.

cannot be in his eares , yet his eares shall be in our praiers. A captaine of the host of Israel beeing cut off by the time, before he could cut off all his enemies , spake to the sunne , saying, *Sunne, stand thou still.* This was a temporall thing , euен time it selfe which he praied for. But there was neuer scene such a daie , neither before nor since, wherein the Lord obeyed the voice of a man y. His praiers were not in the eares of the Lord. They went vp to the sunne, and no further. Yet the eares of the Lord , were in his praiers. For the scripture saies not, that the sunne obeyed , but that the Lord obeyed the voice of a man. To signify, that not onely God,himselfe,will yeeld vnto vs, but also if the sunne, or any other of his creatures, should refuse to giue vs our asking, yet that he will command and compell them also , with himselfe to serue vs. And what man then will not obey the voice of the Lord , seeing the Lord

of praier.

Lord will obey the voice of a man ?
Pharaoh, beeing plagued with frogs,
got the man of God to pray for him.

And the Lord did according to the word of Moses^a. And the Lord obeyed the voice of a man . Moses did according to the word of the Lord.

That's plaine . The Lord did according to the word of Moses . That's straunge . Yet thus it is . And this it shewes; that if Moses will doe according to the word of the lord , the lord will doe according to the word of Moses . If we will keepe his precepts , he will fulfill our praiers . He will fulfill the desire of them that feare him , he also will heare their crie , and will help them . I haue cried , saies the Psalmist , because thou hast heard me^a . One would thinke he should haue said contrariwise , Thou hast heard me , because I haue cried . Yet he saies , I haue cried , because thou hast heard me . To shewe , that crying doeth not alwaies goe before hearing , with god ,

Exod. 8. 13.

Psalm. 4.

The power

as it doeth with vs: but that God will not only heare our crie, but also heare vs before we crie , and will helpe vs. And that which is most admirable of all, though it were a thing which once he purposed never to *gine* vs, yet if we aske it, he will reverse and repeale his owne sentence to pleasure vs. God once repented him , that he had made man, &c said, I wil destroy man whom I haue made , from the face of the earth. Yet when Noah had built an altar and praied to God^b, The lord smelleth a sauour of rest , and said in his heart , I will not henceforth curse the earth any more for mans cause . God once was so displeased with his people , that he said flatly, ^c I tell you truly , I will deliuier you no more. Yet when when they asked a deliuierer of him , his very soule was grieved within him , for the miserie of Israel , and he *gave* them Iepthe to deliuier them from their enemies ^d. God once sent Nathan with this mes-
sage

> Gen.8.12.

Non add m
stra, vt live-
rem vos.

d Judg.10.16.

of praier.

xxvii

sage to David, As the Lord liueth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. Yet when David had ask't forgiuenesse , and said , Hauue mercie vpon me O lord , alter thy great goodnessse , and according to the multitude of thy mercies , doe away mine offences; God sent the same prophet with a contrarie message ^c, The lord hath taken away thy sinne , and thou shalt not die. God once sent Esay with this message to Ezechias , Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not liue. Yet when Ezechias had turned him toward the wall , and wept, and praied, and said, O Lord rememb're howe I haue walked before thee in trueth , and with a perfect heart; God sent the same prophet with a contrarie message , ^d Thus saith the lord, I haue heard thy praiers and thy teares, and now behold thou shalt liue and not die. Then did the king rejoyce in thy strength O lord , exceeding glad was he of thy saluation. For thou

^c 2. Sam 12.13.^d 2. Reg. 20.6.

thou didst graunt him his owne desire, and didst not denie him the request of his lips. He asked life of thee, and thou gauest him a longer life, euen fifteene yeares longer. As also here thou doest promise vs, both for this life, and for all temporall things cōcerning this life, yea though it be a thing, which once thou hadst purposed neuer to giue vs, Aske, and it shall be givēn you.

¶ Cap. 3. 1.

¶ Yea not only God will give you temporall things, but also you shall find spiritual things. Yet the Church saies, i I sought him whome my soule loued, I sought him, and I found him not. But the reason goes before, because she sought him in her bed: she sought him not with her heart. My soule loueth him, saies she, yet at that time her heart loued her bed better. Therefore fayes Augustine, ^b Seek what you seeke, but seeke not where you seeke. Seek Christ: that's a good what. Seek what

^a Querite quid queritis, sed non ubi queritis.

of praier.

what you seeke . But seeke him not in bed. That's an ill where . But seeke not where you seeke . Moses found Christ , not in a soft bed , but in a bramble bush . So that the bed is no fit place to *find* him in , who had not where to rest himselfe . But goe into the garden among the bramble bushes , and there you shall find him , not sleeping , but sweating dropps of blood for your redemption , and eah ling you to him , ⁱ Come vnto me all you that labour , (not you that lie a bed and are secure , but you that labour) and are heauie laden , and I will refresh you . Take my yoke vpō you , and you shall *find* rest for your soules . If you seeke rest with you hearts , with your soules , you shall find rest for your soules ; & that rest also , which is not to be found in the bedde of pleasure , but in the yoke of Christ . If thou seekest for this spirituall rest , as for siluer , and search for it , as for treasures , ^k then shalt thou vnderstand the feare of the Lord , and *find* the

ⁱ Mat. xi. 28.

^k Pro. 2. 11.

The power

I Esay 55.6.

■ Esay 65.1.

■ Math. 8.8.

knowledge of God. Therefore seek the Lord, not in the bed of sensuality, but where he may be found. And seek the lord while he may be found¹. Or rather indeed, though not in what place soeuer, yet at what time so ever we sinners seeke, we shall be sure to finde him, that saies, I am found of them that sought me² not. So that no man, seeking God, shall returne with a *Non est inventus*; but we that haue erred & strayed like lost sheepe, shall finde him, or rather we shall be found of him, before we seeke him. And that which is most wonderfull of all, we shall not onely finde often times before we seeke, but also we shall finde much more then we seeke. That good Centurion³ sought onely one word, *Die verbum*, saies he, but he found more. Christ uttered not onely one word, whereby his servant was healed, but also very many words, wherein he gaue himselfe a most singular praise and commendation for his

of praier.

his faith. Dymas, the theife on the right hand, ^o sought onely to be remembred, when Christ should come into his kingdom, but he *found more*. What talkest thou of beeing remembred, saies Christ, as though thou shouldest be farre from me out of my sight? Tush man, I will doe more for thee then so? Thou shalt not onely be remembred, but thou shalt be with me. And why saist thou, Whē I come into my kingdome? as though it would be a long while first? This very day shalt thou be with me in my kingdome; *this day shalt thou be with me in paradise*. That needie man in the Gospel, ^p sought onely to borrow three loaves, but he *found more*. God his good friend, bad him welcome at midnight, and did not onely lende him, but frankly and freely giue him, not onely three loaves, but as many as he needed, *He gaue him as many as he needed*. Salomon, ^q sought onely wisdom, but he *found more*. Seeing he sought

^oLukas 42.

^pLukas 9.

^q2Chron.1.11

The power

sought first the kingdome of God & the righteousness thereof , all other things besides, were added vnto him. Wherefore if any man want wisdome, or any such spirituall thing , let him with Salomon seeke it of God , & he shall finde it. Yea we shall finde infinitely aboue measure , more then we seeke , or can devise to seeke , of him that saies, Seeke, and you shall finde.

Yea not only you shall find spirituall things, but also it shall be opened vnto you : that's for eternal things. Yet we read that some began to knock , saying, ' Lord, Lord, open vnto vs, and it was not opened vnto them. But the reason is evident elsewhere . Because they did not knock with their hands. They had, I grant lampes in their hands, but they had not oyle in their laps. So that all their knocking, was but as a sounding brasie , or as a tinckling cimball . Whereas if we would knocke to purpose indeede, the

of praier.



the way were , as Christ teacheth vs
elwhere, not to crie Lord, Lord, but
by setting to our hands , to doe and
worke the will of our heauenly fa-
ther. Loe ye, saies Chrysologus, how
loath our good Lord is to denie vs a-
ny thing , seeing though he were ne-
uer so much disposed to keepe vs out,
yet here he teacheth vs a way , how
we may breake open the dores , and
presse in vpon him, and get the king-
dome of heauen whether he will or
no, by the violence and force of faith,
from him . For ther's a great diffe-
rence betweene Diues and God ,
though there be a great agreement
betweene Lazarus and vs. Lazarus
was a beggar full of sores: so are we
all by nature beggars , standing with-
out, and knocking at the dore. Yea,
his bodie was not so full of sores, as
our soule is of sinnes. Lazarus desired
to be relieved with the crummes of
bread , whick fell from the rich mans
board : so haue we all neede , God
wote,

En quām ne-
gare nollet,
qui sibi etiam
neganti, qualit-
ter extorque-
re sur, ostendit.

Lukas 16.40.

wote, to be refreshed with the crums
of mercie, which fall from our ma-
sters table. Yet in one respect, we are
better then Lazarus, In that it was his
hard happe, to knocke at the dore of
a cruell, a wretched, a miserable cai-
tiffe, who could see no time to open
vnto him. But we knocke at the dore
of a most kind, a most liberall, a most
mercifull father, who as soone as he
heareth vs rapping with a lively faith,
which worketh by charitie, hath no
power to keepe vs out any longer,
but presently he openeth vnto vs. And
even as S. Peter, "when he saw that
lame cripple lying vpon the ground,
crauing an almes, at the beautifull
gate of the temple, said vnto him, Sil-
uer and gold haue I none, but such as
I haue, healeth, and recouerie I giue
thee: so Christ, when he seeth vs ly-
ing prostrate, groueling on the ground
before him, and knocking for an
almes at the beautifull gate of his ho-
ly temple, by and by openeth vnto

vs,

of praier.

vs, and giues vs not siluer or gold , or any such corruptible thing, but health and saluation to our soules, and all the inestimable riches of his glorie , and all the eternall treasures of his kingdome. O that some of you would a little trie, whether this be true which I say or no ! that you would bounce as hard as euer you can, at this beautifull gate, and say with the Psalmist, ^x Arise, arise , O Lord , why sleepest thou ? I warrant you , you shold heare him answer you in another Psalme, ^y Now for the pitifull cōplaint of the poore, I will arise, saith the Lord; I will sleepe no longer, I will arise and open ynto them. So it was opened to the poore Publican. He went vp to the temple to pray , and when he came thither, he knocked his breast and said, Lord , be mercifull ynto me a sinner. Therefore the doore of mercie was opened ynto him , and he wcnt home, euen into heauen his long home, more iustified in the sight of God ,

C 2 then

^x Psal.44.23.

^y Psal.11.5.

^z Luk.18.13.

The power

a A.D. 7. 56.

b Psal. 118. 19.

c A.D. 16. 25.

then that other which iustified himself. So was it *opened* to S. Steuen ^a. He was brought out to be stoned. But when he came forth, the very stones could not knocke him so hard, as his p[ri]est knockt heauen gate, whē as he laid, Lord Iesus let me in, Lord Iesus receiue my spirit. Therefore the gate was *opened* vnto him. He saw the heauen opened, and Iesus standing at the right hand of God, where he within a while after, shold sit himselfe. So was it *opened* to king ^b Dauid. He knockt very imperiously, not like a petitioner, but like a commander. Lift vp your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift vp ye euerlasting dores, that the King of glorie may come in. Open vnto me the gate of the righteous, that I may enter in and praise the Lord. And when the gate was *opened*, as he was entring in, he pointed to it and said, This is the gate of the righteous, the iust shall enter into it. So was it *opened* to S. Paul. ^c He was cast downe

of praier.

downe into the very lowest dungeon.
 All the chaines of darknes , and euen
 hell it selfe , could not haue held him
 faster, then that dungeon did. Yet at
 midnight, when he praied & knockt,
 suddenly all the prison dores flew a-
 pen, yea all the dores of heauen like-
 wise stood open , and that which is
 most maruelous of all , they stood so
 wide open , that not onely S. Paul
 himselfe went in , but also Stephanas
 the iayler , and his whole houshold,
 whome he at that time conuerted and
 baptized , did enter in with him. So
 that all , all eternall things are ours,
 and nothing , nothing can preuaile a-
 gainst vs, if we knocke as we ought.
 Not the brasen gates of hell,to shut vs
 in, nor the golden gates of heauen, to
 shut vs out. For Christ hath said here;
Knocke, and it shall be opened unto you.
 Thus much for the second part, what
 God for our praier will performe to
 vs in these words , *And it shall be given*
you, and you shall find, and it shall be ope-

The power

ned vnto you.

Now then my deere brethren, give me leaue, I beseech you, to speake vnto you, me I say, that am the seruant of God, and your seruant for God, as Naman the Syrians seruants said vnto him. Father, say they, if the prophet had commaunded thee a great thing, wouldst thou not haue done it? how much more then , when he saith vnto thee, Wash, and be cleane? Brethren, say I, if he that is more then a prophet, had commanded you a great thing, would you not haue done it? how much more then when he saith vnto you . Wash, and be cleane, Ask, and it shall be given you? He desires to be desired. And he ha's not his owne will, except we haue ours. But we may haue what we will for asking. God doeth aske no more of vs, but only that we would vouchsafe to aske him . Doe no more, saies he, but aske, and haue; Doe no more, but seeke,

of praier.

seeke, and finde: Doe no more, but knocke, and enter in. O how easily, & yet howe powerfully doeth praier worke! It ouercommeth all beastes. The Leviathan, the strength of all Gods creatures, was so subdued by praier, that whereas otherwise he might haue beeene a gulf to swallowe vp Jonas quicke, and for euer to deuoure him, he became a shipp to saue him. It ouercommeth all men. Jacob giueth Ioseph one portion aboue his brethren, which he got of the Amorites, by his sword and by his bowe. But the Chaldee Paraphraſt, translates it, *By my praier, and by my ſupplication.* Which translation prooueth, that praier is the ſword, and ſupplication is the bowe of a Christian, wherewith he ſubdueth all his enemies. It ouercommeth the devill himſelfe. Praier and fasting, are the cheifest meanes to caſt him out. If we reſift him by praier, he will flie from vs. Yea the moſt ſilly beast in all the for-

rest, is not so much affrighted and amazed, when a lyon roareth, as this cowardly beast the deuill is daunted and terrified, when a Christian prayeth. What shall I say more? It overcommeth him that cannot be overcome, making the virgins son stoupe downe, and condescend vnto vs. I pray thee let me goe, saies he, to one that wrestled with him all the night long by praier. If thou wilt be a suter to God, God will be a suter to thee. If thou wilt pray vnto God, God will pray vnto thee. I pray thee, saies he, let me goe. But what doeth Israel answer? I will not let thee goe, except thou blesse me. No will? It is not behelike now as God will, but as man will. God is taken captiue by praier, and become a prisoner to man, and stands at his curtesie, who saies, I will not let thee goe, except thou blesse me. And that which is more then all this, if more may be, praier overcommeth God, not onely beeing well pleased,

of praier.

as he was with Israel, when any child may deale with him , but also beeing displeased , as he was with the Israe-lites,when no man may come neere him;when his wrath burneth as fire; when he thunders from heauen; and teares the clouds in peeces; & cleaves the rockes asunder ; and shakes sand and sea togither;and makes the whole earth in a trembling fitte of feare , flie away from him. Yet if some Moses doe but stand vp in the gap and pray, all this omnipotent power,shall come to nothing ; god shall not be able, though he be never so angrie, to enter vpon the breach , but praier shall haue the victorie,& get the conquest of him. Wherefore beloued, once againe I say,let vs alwaies intrench our selues within this invincible bulwark of praier. Our whole life alas , as we haue made it by sinne, is most misera-ble. There is no man aliue , if he had knowne before he was borne, what miseries would haue befallen him in
this

this life , but would haue wished; I warrant you, with all his heart, that that which was the wombe of his birth, had bin the tombe for his buriall. But in all the calamities of this life, our onely comfort is praier. In all the afflictions of this life, our onely for-tressse is praier. Praier, whercby we are oftentimes in spirit with the Apostle, raine vp into the third heaven,, where we, that are otherwise but wormes, walke with the angels ; and euen continualy talke with God. Hence it is that holy men and women in former time, could never haue enough of this exercise. Nazianzen in his Epitaph for his sister Gorgonia writeth , that shee was so giuen to praier, & that her knees seemed to cleaue to the earth, & to growe to the very ground, by reason of continuance in praier. Gregorio in his Dialogues writeth , that his aunt Trasilla being dead, was foud to haue her elbowes as hard as hornes. Which hardnes she got by leaning to a deske,

Scritto yma-
re a d'ispe
muntuozio
tua.

of praier.

199.

a deske , at which she vsed to pray . Eusebius in his historie writeth that Iames the brother of our Lord , had knees as hard as cammells knees , benummed & bereiuued of all sense and feeling , by reason of continual kneeling in prayer . Hierom in the life of Paul the Eremitte , writeth , that he was found dead , kneeling vpon his knees , holding vp his hands , lifting vp his cies . So that the very dead corps seemed yet to liue and by a kind of religiouse gesture to pray still vnto God . O how happie and how blessed , was that soule without the body , when as that bodie without the soule was so deuout ! O that we may be , that we may be likewise , so happy and so blessed as this holy man was , that we may depart hence , in such sort as he did , that is in such sort as Christ did , who died in prayer , saying *Father into thy handes I commend my spirit* , that our lord when he cōmeth , may find vs so doing , that when we shall lie vpon our

Item cada-
ver mortui of-
ficiolo getu
precabatur.

The power

our death bed, gasping for breath, ready to give vp the ghost, then the precious soule of euerie one of vs, redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, may passe away in a prayer, in a secret and sweet prayer, may passe I say, out of Adam's body, into Abram's bosome; Through the tender mercies of Jesus Christ, to whom with the father and the holy ghost, be all honour and glorie, power and praise, dignitie and dominion, now & euermore. Amen.

Finis.